

DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES (REVISED)
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2018- 7:00 PM
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Patrick Johnston, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Gladys Cooper, Patrick Johnston, Frederick Karrat, David Metrena, Kathleen Molinaro, Emanuela Palmares, Amy Spallino, Farley Santos (7:49 pm)

Absent: Richard Hawley, Richard Jannelli

Also Present: Sal Pascarella, Kevin Walston, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess (8:05 pm), and Joe Martino

RECOGNITIONS

Ellen Meyer, 2018 Teacher of the Year

Dr. Edie Thomas, principal at Broadview Middle School introduced Ms. Meyer. She said you can see her car in the parking lot at 6:30 am in the morning and after 5:00 pm in the evening. She is a dedicated teacher and doesn't let the kids quit. She led a math team against Brookfield, Newtown, and Ridgefield that won first place. On Friday she is representing our district at the state level. Michael McLachlan, State Senator, and Michael Ferguson, State Representative, presented Ms. Meyer with a plaque and thanked her for the 25 years that she gave to the students in the Danbury Public School system.

The Board applauded Ms. Meyer and thanked her for her dedication to students.

Dr. Pascarella said that Connecticut is made up of 169 towns and all of their teachers submit applications. She is going to represent us at the State level.

DHS Freshman, Khushi Parikh, one of the top 300 MASTERS in a national science competition

Dr. Frank LaBanca introduced Khushi Parikha. He said she is a freshman this year at Danbury High School. She was recognized last year as one of the top 300 Masters in a national science competition that drew more than 2,500 entrants when she was at Westside Middle School. Dr. LaBanca said he looks forward to seeing the work she does at Danbury High.

Khushi asked if she could address the Board. She told them her project belongs to her many family members who helped her out so much. She said her project was, "Image Recognition to Diagnose Lyme Disease." She told the Board that she designed a software application that can detect Lyme disease from a photo image of a rash with 90% accuracy. She said in the future, from a special type rash, medical people would be able to diagnose the disease. There are 15,000 people that have Lyme in the New England area. She told the Board she is thankful to be given the opportunity to be here tonight to tell them about her project. Dr. LaBanca said they always have projects going on at Westside. He has even been invited by a group of students to participate in one of their projects. He said he found it very enjoyable. He also added that they are the highest performing school on projects at the State level.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Will Love, founder of Danbury area justice network and local activist, told the Board that he felt the teachers, particularly at the elementary level, are not properly trained to work with children of same sex families, children that are gender non-conforming or transgender. They need to be in a safe environment and he would like to see professional development training in this area.

The Superintendent, Dr. Pascarella, introduced Mr. Kevin Walston, Assistant Superintendent for Schools and District Development, and Dr. Kara Casimiro, Director of Instruction and Assessment. The Board welcomed them.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION - David Metrena moved, seconded by Kathleen Molinaro that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibits 18-91 through 18-93, as recommended:

Ms. Rachel Chaleski told the Board that she wants to make a motion to amend the Special Meeting Minutes, Exhibit 18-93, dated July 11, 2018, to include the following:

Presentations were made on behalf of the administration and grievant. Testimony was heard by Kathleen Kennedy. The unanimous consensus of the Board was to deny the grievance filed and authorized Thomas Mooney to issue a written decision on this matter on behalf of the Board.

MOTION – Rachel Chaleski moved, seconded by Manuela Palmares, that the Board of Education accept the amended Minutes of the Special Meeting held on July 11, 2018.

MINUTES

- 6/27/18 Superintendent Evaluation Meeting
- 6/27/18 Board Meeting
- 7/11/18 Amended Special Board Meeting

Motion carried at 7:21 pm.

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE (SPOTLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL)

Discuss Spotlight Your School Schedule

Dr. Pascarella referred the Board to Exhibit 18-94, “Spotlight your School Schedule.” And asked if the Board members would like to follow the schedule of meeting every two months at a school that is spotlighted for that date. Having the Board meeting at the school was suggested at the last Board meeting. The consensus was not to do that for several reasons. One is the logistics, and several Board members felt if it was at a particular school, only the parents in that district would probably attend. You would not get a cross-section of people to attend Board meetings. Dr. Pascarella agreed that it would be difficult. Some of the ideas were to do it three times a year; spend an hour at the school before the Board meeting or have an optional tour of the school in the morning.

Ms. Palmares told the Board that the Adult Education Program needs to be spotlighted as well and asked if it could be added. The Superintendent said he would find a way to include them. Since the majority of the Board members were not in favor of the new schedule, Dr. Pascarella said they would modify it. Mr. Martino responded maybe we could have the Sites and Facilities meetings at different schools.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The Chairperson, Mr. Johnston mentioned to the Board that the Student Representatives would be attending the second Board meeting each month.

PRESENTATION - None

ACTION ITEMS

Healthy Food Certification (beverages)

MOTION: David Metrena moved, seconded by Gladys Cooper that the Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

Motion carried at 7:30 pm.

June 2018 – End of Year Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

MOTION: David Metrena moved, seconded by Rachel Chaleski that the Board of Education accept the 2018 End of Year Operating Results Analysis (General Fund)

Mr. Martino told the Board that during the month of June 2018, the District expended \$1,498,305 resulting in a fiscal year-to-date expenditure value of \$123,896,276. Which represents 96.6% of the General Fund total budget.

Mr. Martino told the Board that we closed in the black this year. Ms. Cooper asked about the portable classrooms and he said they are moving along. The foundations are in and the Fire Marshal has given approval. There are 8 portables at Westside.

The Board applauded Mr. Martino for closing the budget in the black.

Motion carried at 7:32 pm.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Start of School Update

The Superintendent said there was a little difficulty at the start of school. The issues we are having are all transportation. We are having problems with bus stops. The heat also added to the problem with the start of school. If it is 95/96° we make the determination to dismiss early. Danbury High School’s schedule went well. Some staff resigned the first week of school and we have to fill those jobs.

Dr. Pascarella thanked the teachers for all they did for the students during the heat wave we experienced.

Enrollment Update

The Superintendent told the Board we now have 11,572 students in our district. The Facilities Committee has to meet to strive for classes of 22-23, 24-26. The high school graduation requirements also need to be discussed. We have to look at math and science which is going to be a challenge. Mr. Martino told the Board about some increases in enrollment. Schools that experienced increases are Mill Ridge Primary, Park Avenue, Stadley Rough, grade 8 at both Broadview and Rogers Park, grade 6 at Westside, a slight increase at Danbury High and ACE. Dr. Pascarella said that the Reception Center on Osborne Street were processing 40-50 students on the Friday before school started. Without that Department, we would have had 75-100 students not in school.

Ms. Palmares asked about tutors. She said special needs students get paired up with a tutor, then they get shifted. Ms. Thompson explained the situation with tutors and mentioned that it is not our highest paid group.

Hiring Update

Ms. Thompson said we had 110 new hires, which is just about right. She told the Board that she was very pleased with the level of staff in her office. We have turned around quicker this year than last. Resignations at the end of the school year was a problem. We are still doing hiring in science. We have been advertising we pay subs \$100 per day. We reached out to people that came back as subs. We need to do some more training, which is a work in process. The summer schools were held in a few locations this year. We have some other challenges for that for next year. I will probably be able to give you a demographic overview in October.

Dr. Pascarella said that Kristen Bradley is the Interim Principal at Morris Street; Marnie Durkin is Interim Principal at Ellsworth; Michelle Tarsi is the Interim Assistant Principal at Park Avenue for the balance of the year.

2019-2020 Draft School Calendar

Mr. Walston called the Board's attention to Version J - 9/11/18 draft calendar. He spoke about the added one-hour early release days on this Version; September 24, May 19 and June 17. A discussion ensued about not having school on Veterans Day, November 11th. Board members commented on whether schools should be in session. A Board member commented if they are not in school that day then the parents should tell them about the holiday. Ms. Palmares asked Dr. Pascarella if he would be commemorating the holiday.

DISCUSSION - None

INFORMATION

2018-2019 Alliance Grant

Mr. Martino said we have had this grant for 6-7 years. It is \$9.4 million dollars and it is a new model. He told the Board that Kara Casimiro and Kevin Walston have been working on the grant for the last month. Mr. Martino mentioned that the Priority Grant is \$1.6 million, and he will know more about the Title I grant next week.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

CABE/CAPSS Convention, November 16-17, 2018, Groton, CT

The Chairperson said that the CABE/CAPSS Convention this year will be in Groton, CT and that more information about the Convention will be given to the Board.

Mr. Johnston read the following e-mail that he received from Richard Jannelli who could not be here tonight: *"As you know due to the constant increase in enrollment of our students this is creating a space problem in the schools and I am also concerned about a safety issue. Therefore, as Chair can you make as a Board goal, which coincides with the Superintendent's goal, that we through the Sites and Facilitates Committee research this problem and by end of the year come up with a proposal to the Board that we can study which will satisfy this problem? Thanks, Richard"*.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Ms. Chaleski said that there will be a workshop with guest speaker, Thomas Hennick, who is a Public Information Officer, at City Hall on September 20th from 6:30-8:00 pm to discuss Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission.

Ms. Cooper asked if the Superintendent's Evaluation Committee meeting could meet before the Board Meeting on September 26th. She said that it was important that they meet before they actually get into the evaluation. The Chairperson said the meeting will be at 5:30 pm on September 26th.

Ms. Palmares said there will be an "American Dream Award" Awards Gala on September 22 at the Amber Room. They expect about 400 people to attend.

Ms. Palmares told the Board that over the summer at a community meeting, a parent approached her to discuss the lunch policy at the schools pertaining to when a student does not have money for lunch or hasn't paid. There were reports in the community that the lunch is thrown away in front of the student if they did not pay for lunch or if they do not have money for lunch and asked that it be investigated.

Ms. Spallino mentioned to the Board that Debbie Irving wrote a book, "Waking up White." The session was so good, with a large turnout, that she is offering three more sessions as part of the series in Windsor, Ct. on September 17 and 24 and October 1st. If anyone is interested, they should contact Anne Mead.

Mr. Santos thanked the Board and community members for their support when his family experienced the loss of their child.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: K. Molinaro moved, seconded by F. Santos that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining discussions with School Lunch Personnel, Teamsters Local Union No. 688; Safety Advocates, Teamsters Local Union 677; and pending litigation, with possible action in Public Session.

Motion carried at 8:18 pm.

Present:	Rachel Chaleski	Gladys Cooper
	Patrick Johnston	Fred Karrat
	David Metrena	Kathleen Molinaro
	Emanuela Palmares	Farley Santos
	Amy Spallino	

Also Present: Sal Pascarella and Kevin Walston, Joe Martino, Kim Thompson, Kelly Truchsess from Administration.

Absent: Richard Hawley Richard Jannelli

The Chair called the Executive Session to order at 8:21 pm and turned the meeting over to Kim Thompson.

PUBLIC SESSION

K. Molinaro moved, seconded by E. Palmares, that the Board of Education return to Public Session.

Motion passed unanimously at 9:01 pm.

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by F. Karrat, that the Board of Education ratify the contract with the School Lunch Personnel, Teamsters Local Union No. 677.

Motion passed unanimously at 9:01 pm.

MOTION: D. Metrena moved, seconded by G. Cooper that the Board of Education ratify the contract with the Safety Advocates, Teamsters Local Union 677.

Motion passed unanimously at 9:02 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

P. Johnston moved, seconded by D. Metrena that the Board of Education adjourns its meeting of September 12, 2018, and the meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Rachel Chaleski, Secretary

(meeting videotaped)